

4-Year-Old Funded Kindergarten

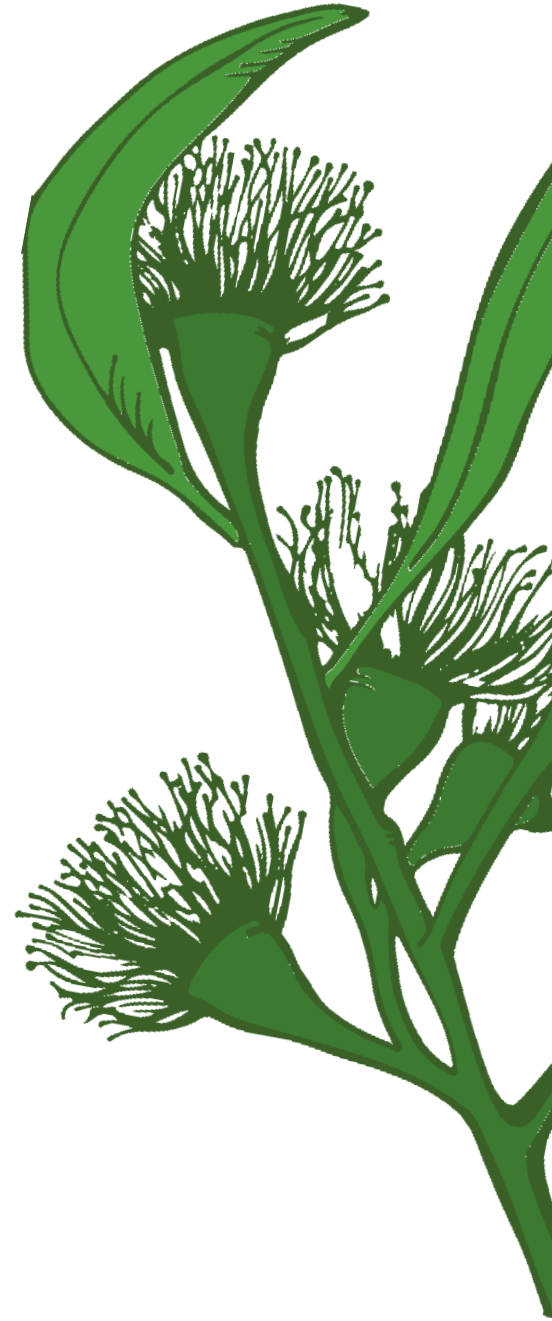


EXPLORE & LEARN

Outdoor Educational Program

Gum Nut is offering 2-3 days per week (days to be advised) where our kindergarten program is based primarily in Alphington Park & Wetlands area but will also include Darebin Parklands and Sparks Reserve. Children at our kindergarten will receive a combination of kinder hours in our upstairs dedicated kinder room and rooftop playground, as well as the natural outdoor setting; combined with the larger outdoor experience of the Wetlands.

It is our deep understanding and belief that children learn best in spaces where they have time and space to explore. Children thrive in environments that are consistent and familiar yet still change to provide intrigue, inspiration and challenge for learning. Children are happier, freer and more willing to take risks and explore new situations when they play outdoors. That is why we at Gum Nut give our Kindergarten children the opportunity to participate in the Explore & Learn Program in our local parks and wetlands.





The Explore & Learn program allows children to:

- Make connections with nature and natural materials (children who make connections with nature are more likely to value and protect it)
- Learn to navigate through the environment – while consistent and familiar, nature subtly changes day to day and these surroundings will promote continued inspiration to learn.
- Provides empowering opportunities for decision-making, problem-solving, individually and as a group.
- Freely experience and practice various fine and gross motor skills which promote development and a healthy lifestyle.
- Develop enhanced vocabulary through learning new words and expressing them appropriately.
- Develop problem-solving techniques and skills for experimentation and inquiry, as they push new limits by being engaged in real-life experiences.
- Begin to understand and respect their environment, themselves and each other.
- Take safe risks.
- Builds social awareness by assisting others, working as a team sharing discoveries.

Things your child will need to participate in the program:

- Sun smart broad-brimmed red Kinder Hat (to stay at Gum Nut)
- Gum boots (tall)
- Closed footwear **MUST** be worn each day – no sandals, thongs, or crocs.
- Waterproof raincoat (labelled)
- Labelled water bottle, must be taken home each day & washed.
- A carry bag (supplied by Gum Nut)
- A change of clothes in their bag **EVERYDAY** (underwear, socks, top and bottoms)
- No spaghetti strap tops, and shoulders must be covered.





Explore and Learn sessions:

- No pre-set times – this will be flexible as to the day’s events HOWEVER the children may be ready to go offsite anytime from 8.45AM and returned by 3.30pm.
- All meals will be provided by Gum Nut.
- Arrival/Departure: If your child’s group has already left for Explore and Learn and you arrive at the centre after this, your child must remain at the centre. As our risk assessment has already been completed. If you wish to collect your child from Explore and Learn, you must go to the centre first, sign out your child and collect any belongings, then retrieve an exit pass from the office and hand this to your child’s teacher on arrival at the parklands.
- Term 1: This is when we will ease the children in. We will focus on being in the top half of the park and smaller marked-out areas – learning about road safety, walking to/from the park, establishing boundaries/routines and getting familiar with the new space.
- Term 2, 3 & 4: As the children increase in their understanding of safety and know the space, we will venture further into the parklands – the oval, alongside the river trail, the old swimming pool and wetland surrounds, along the creek trail and over the bridges as we explore the local area. Whilst we aim to go offsite each of the set days consistently throughout the year, towards the end of Term 4 we find that the children can sometimes become tired and prefer shorter or fewer Explore & Learn sessions. Offsite learning during Term 4 is therefore quite flexible based on the children’s needs.
- Gum Nut’s weather and sun smart policy will apply to the duration of our programs and ability to run on certain days – please ensure your child is always dressed for the weather and ready to be outdoors for extended periods.
- 2-3 teachers will always accompany children whilst at the park.
- The program will be well resourced: music, literacy, numeracy, and art opportunities even whilst outdoors.
- No home toys or valuables from children will be permitted to come on Explore and Learn programs.





School Readiness:

In term 4, our kindergarten program focuses on School Readiness. Essentially, we engage in diverse experiences that help your child prepare for primary school. We have a close relationship with Alphington Primary School, we take the children on excursions to visit the prep classroom. This allows them the opportunity to look around, meet some primary school teachers and students, ask questions, and become familiar with the environment. We teach them about recess and lunchtime routines. We have a week where the children are required to bring a lunchbox to Gum Nut. We teach them about opening lunchboxes and not eating all their food at once. We start using a bell and ask that they ask permission before using the toilet. So they can be prepared for what is lying ahead. We also set up a dramatic play area of a primary school which allows them to engage in role-experiences, and try on school uniforms, which get the children very excited for primary school!





Daily Routine (Flexible)

8.30-4.30pm are the official kinder hours, BEST to arrive and be ready by 8.45AM to minimise disruptions to your child's day and the program.

During Term 1 we will be beginning walks to the park, learning about road safety & staying together when we leave the centre; as well as familiarizing the children with Alphington Wetlands and local parks. Gradually we will change the areas in which we engage in our outdoor program and during term 2, we plan to be based on our Explore and Learn program in the wetlands area.

These routines are a work in progress – as we work out the dynamics of each day's groups and what their interests are, times may change. It is subject to regular change to suit the group.

Given that this year there will be much of the kinder program off-site as we develop new routines, we will make them available to families – the hours of Kinder will not change and so **prompt morning arrival** is of utmost importance.





Example routine (onsite): Please note this routine is flexible and changes based on children's interests, weather and a wide range of factors.

8.45AM Welcome & Morning group time in the kinder room (consists of songs, stories, group discussions, role play, letter of the week activities)

9.15AM Morning activity time – large and small group activities, indoor/outdoor flow

Morning tea is served progressively – as children are ready, they wash their hands and help themselves to fruit from approximately 9.30-10.30am

11:45-12.30pm LUNCH – can sometimes be progressive (intervals) depending on activities children are involved in while outdoors but we do like to promote eating together as this is what is closest to the school model.

After lunch – outdoor play/ activities in the Gum Nut Garden

2:00pm Group time/rest time – usually dance/songs/stories followed by various optional, restful activities (quiet reading, drawing, lying down, sensory play)

2:20pm Indoor/outdoor afternoon activity time – large and small group activities

3.00pm Afternoon teatime amidst afternoon activity time.

4:00pm Pack up time and afternoon group time/reflection of day.

4:30pm Family Grouping in the Gum Nut garden.





Example routine (offsite) Explore and Learn program:

8.45-9am Welcome & Morning group time (explaining the day to the children, hats and sunscreen on, packing water bottles and toileting)

9-9.30am Morning Tea and prepare for departure to chosen destination for Explore and Learn.

9:30-9:45AM Depart for Explore & Learn.

10:00-10:15AM Group Games, songs, talking about what we will do offsite – resources we have brought down.

11.30am Walk back to Gum Nut for lunch.

12:15-1:00pm LUNCH – can sometimes be progressive (intervals) depending on activities children are involved in while outdoors but we do like to promote eating together as this is what is closest to the school model).

1.30pm Group time/rest time – usually dance/songs/stories followed by various optional, restful activities (quiet reading, drawing, lying down, sensory play)

2.00pm Indoor/outdoor afternoon activity time – large and small group activities.

3.00pm Afternoon teatime amidst afternoon activity time.

3:45pm Pack up time and afternoon group time/reflection of the day.

4.30pm Resume Centre family grouping.





Final notes & housekeeping:

CLOTHING – Please ensure your child is dressed for fun and exploration in the environment. Please do not send your child to kinder in clothes you don't want them to get paint or dirt on. Please pack a SPARE pair of clothes (pants, t-shirt, underwear, socks) in case of messy play or toileting accidents. Please remember cool clothes for summer and a jacket and beanie for winter (gumboots too for Explore and Learn).

FOOTWEAR – At kinder, we love to climb and run – please ensure closed footwear or sandals that cover toes – it is our preference you do not send your child in flip flops or crocs – they can lose grip and are not appropriate for outdoor activity.

MEALS - Morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea are provided by Gum Nut. Lunchboxes, please discourage this until school readiness week in October. It is our preference that children are eating lunch from Gum Nut only unless for dietary reasons you have to supply your own food.

Allergies – Bring a treat box, please.

Allergies/Asthma - All medication must be left at Gum Nut with an appropriate action plan from a doctor. Please see the teachers if this applies to you. Your child cannot and will not be accepted at kinder without the proper medications, etc.

HATS – We will be purchasing a bulk order of hats for each child. They will be labelled and will remain at kinder – **they are not to go home**. Please always keep them in your child's hat pocket.

SUNSCREEN- Kinder will supply unless due to allergies you will supply your own. Please apply on arrival to kinder daily.

Drink Bottles – labelled brought to kinder daily and taken home to wash and return – at least 600ml, please. Pop this on the drink table each day.

EMAILS – Check this often and keep us informed of email changes. This is our primary method of communication in the kinder room. It is your responsibility that we have your current contact details, or your child will miss important information. This email is not for administration information - e.g: sick days, change of days, update contact information etc – please email office.



TOYS – We understand that children may want to bring a comfort toy or blanket to kinder – once they are settled, we will always encourage them to put this away in their bags. Home toys are welcome but not encouraged (put in the rooms home toy box until 3:00 pm) – there are lots happening at kinder and we want to maximise your child’s opportunity to be involved. Home toys WILL NOT be permitted on the explore and learn program- we do not take responsibility for any lost or broken toys.

LOST PROPERTY- Please check our lost property tub regularly. Unlabelled items in the tub will be donated to a charity bin at the end of each month.

Communication Pockets- Please check this daily – there are always lots of excursion forms letters and notices for the kinder children and this is where you will find them.

Excursion Levy – We ask that a excursion levy be paid in advance to assist with excursion planning and minimise handling of finances over the year. We ask this to be paid in cash to the kinder teachers. With each excursion, you WILL need to complete a permission form and return it in the allocated time, or your child cannot attend. For incursions, we will try and have a centralized permission sign-in system available at the sign-in table.

Parent Teacher Interviews- Mid-August, more details to follow.

School transition reports- Parent component to be completed August- September, Teachers will complete in September-October.

Graduation – December TBC.

Facebook – We have a Kinder Facebook page. Please see a Kinder Teacher to get connected for regular photos, updates & live videos of what we get up to during the day. (Only parents/guardians who’s child/ren attends Gum Nut’s 4 y/o kinder program will be accepted).